

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization  
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date  
20 December 2001 (20.12.2001)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number  
**WO 01/97432 A3**

(51) International Patent Classification<sup>7</sup>: G09C . H04L 9/00      (81) Designated States (*national*): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZW.

(21) International Application Number: PCT/US01/18805

(22) International Filing Date: 12 June 2001 (12.06.2001)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:  
09/591,686      12 June 2000 (12.06.2000) US

(71) Applicant: SURETY.COM [US/US]; 46030 Manekin Plaza, Sterling, VA 20166 (US).

(72) Inventors: DOONAN, Wes; 13117A Autumn Woods Way, Fairfax, VA 22033-5022 (US). WETTLAUFER, Albert, J.; 12116 Walnut Branch Road, Reston, VA 20194-5630 (US).

(74) Agents: STANTON, Lawrence, T., III et al.; Pennie & Edmonds LLP, 1155 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036 (US).

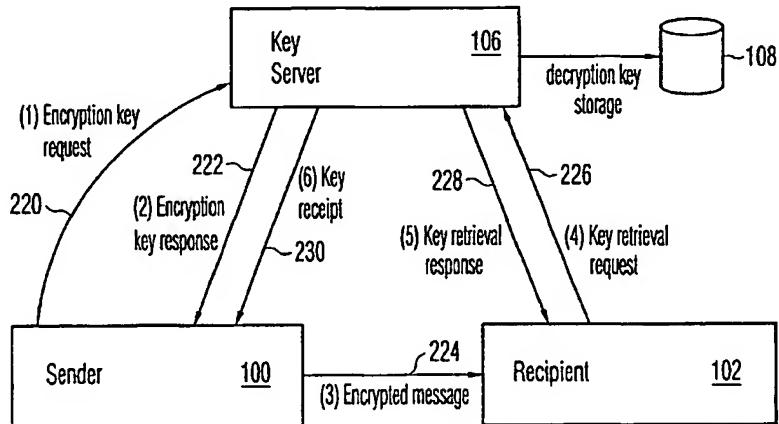
(84) Designated States (*regional*): ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

**Published:**  
— with international search report

(88) Date of publication of the international search report: 20 June 2002

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

(54) Title: SECURE MESSAGING SYSTEM WITH RETURN RECEIPTS



**WO 01/97432 A3**

(57) **Abstract:** A method and system for electronic messaging in which a sender (100) of an electronic message (224) receives a return receipt (230), without having to send the message contents to a third party. The sender (100) contacts a server (106) to obtain an encryption key to encrypt the message. The server (106) returns an encryption key (312) along with key retrieval information (314) to the sender (100). The key retrieval information (314) can be used to obtain from the server (106) the decryption key (332) corresponding to the returned encryption key (312). The sender (100) encrypts the message (604), along with the key retrieval information (314), to the recipient (102). The recipient (102) sends the key retrieval information (314) to the server (106) to receive the corresponding decryption key (332). The recipient (102) then decrypts the encrypted message (720) received from the sender (100) using the decryption key (332). When the recipient (102) sends a request to obtain the decryption key (332), the server (106) notifies the sender (100) when the key has been successfully retrieved. The fact that the decryption key (332) was retrieved by the recipient (102) indicates to the sender (100) that the recipient (102) received the message.

# INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US01/18805

**A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER**

IPC(7) : G09C, H04L 9/00  
US CL : 380/279

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

**B. FIELDS SEARCHED**

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)  
U.S. : 380/278,279,30,21

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)  
WEST, "message and receipt", "email and server", "return receipt"

**C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT**

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	US 5,481,613 A (Ford et al.) 02 January 1996, column 4, lines 14-18, column 5, lines 18-49, column 6, lines 6-7, column 6, lines 40-66.	1-13
Y	US 5,790,790 A (Smith et al.) 04 August 1998, column 14, lines 27-34	1-13
Y,P	US 6,154,543 A (Baltzley) 28 November 2000, column 5, lines 8-20, column 6, lines 23-26.	2,5,11,13
A	US 5,710,816 A (Stork et al) 20 January 1998, column 5, lines 46-60.	1, 3, 10

Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:	"T"	later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	"X"	document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
"E" earlier application or patent published on or after the international filing date	"Y"	document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	"&"	document member of the same patent family
"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means		
"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed		

Date of the actual completion of the international search

13 November 2001 (13.11.2001)

Date of mailing of the international search report

04 DEC 2001

Name and mailing address of the ISA/US

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks  
Box PCT  
Washington, D.C. 20231

Facsimile No. (703)305-3230

Authorized officer

Gail O. Hayes *Janea R. Matthews*  
Telephone No. (703) 305-4274